



April 4, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
U.S. Senate
Appropriations Committee
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510-6025

The Honorable Susan Collins, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Appropriations Committee
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510-6025

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
U.S. Senate
Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510-6025

The Honorable John Neely Kennedy, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510-6025

Dear Chairs Murray and Collins and Ranking Members Murray and Kennedy:

As Congress develops its Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations priorities for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, I am writing on behalf of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) to respectfully request funding for the following programs and projects:

— **\$50 million for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP)**

In FY 2025, NESP will initiate construction of three project construction contract awards totaling \$35 million, capacity support for nine federal and state agencies as well as UMRBA, monitoring activities (including at L&D 22 fish passage), planning activities for systemic forest stewardship, and planning and design activities for eleven ecosystem restoration projects, including systemic water level management. In addition, the \$50 million appropriation would support foundational programmatic efforts such as developing strategic management plans, ecological restoration and sustainability goals and objectives, and an adaptive management plan.

— **\$55 million for the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Program**

In FY 2025, UMRR will implement 27 habitat projects across five states and three Corps Districts. Of these 27 projects, UMRR will be actively constructing 10 projects and advance planning and design on 16 habitat projects. These projects integrate a broad range of restoration techniques that strive to use or mimic the river's natural processes to enhance and protect important fish and wildlife habitat, restore the river's floodplain structure and function, and counteract the factors degrading the river's ecological health. UMRR will continue its long term resource monitoring and research, providing a much clearer understanding of the complex, dynamic relationships among various ecosystem components and watershed drivers.

— **\$1.835 million for renewed flow frequency probabilities and water surface profiles for the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers**

In FY 2025, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will complete the hydraulic routing model and associated flow and climate assessments, employ the analyses, and develop a report of the findings. Flood risk assessments and forecasting capabilities are necessary to reduce damages and loss of life associated with increasingly frequent and major flood events in the Upper Mississippi River. Accurate and accessible information will improve our ability to develop a systemic flood plan and improve management capabilities.

— **Full utilization of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund to support inland navigation new construction and major rehabilitation projects**

— **Funding to support full capability of the Upper Mississippi River System 9-foot navigation channel operations and maintenance**

UMRBA is the Governor-established forum for interstate water resource planning and management on the Upper Mississippi River, representing its member states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin and working collaboratively with the federal agencies as well as the navigation industry, environmental organizations, local communities, and others who work directly to improve the Upper Mississippi River System. UMRBA's member states are strongly committed to the principles of sustainability and multi-use as the foundation of the river's management. The programs and projects listed above collectively help to improve the health and resilience of the navigation system and ecosystem as well as the many river communities of the Upper Mississippi River System.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please contact me at 651-224-2880 or kwallace@umrba.org to arrange an opportunity to discuss our request in more detail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed in a thin blue rectangular border.

Kirsten Wallace
Executive Director
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

cc: House Upper Mississippi River Delegation